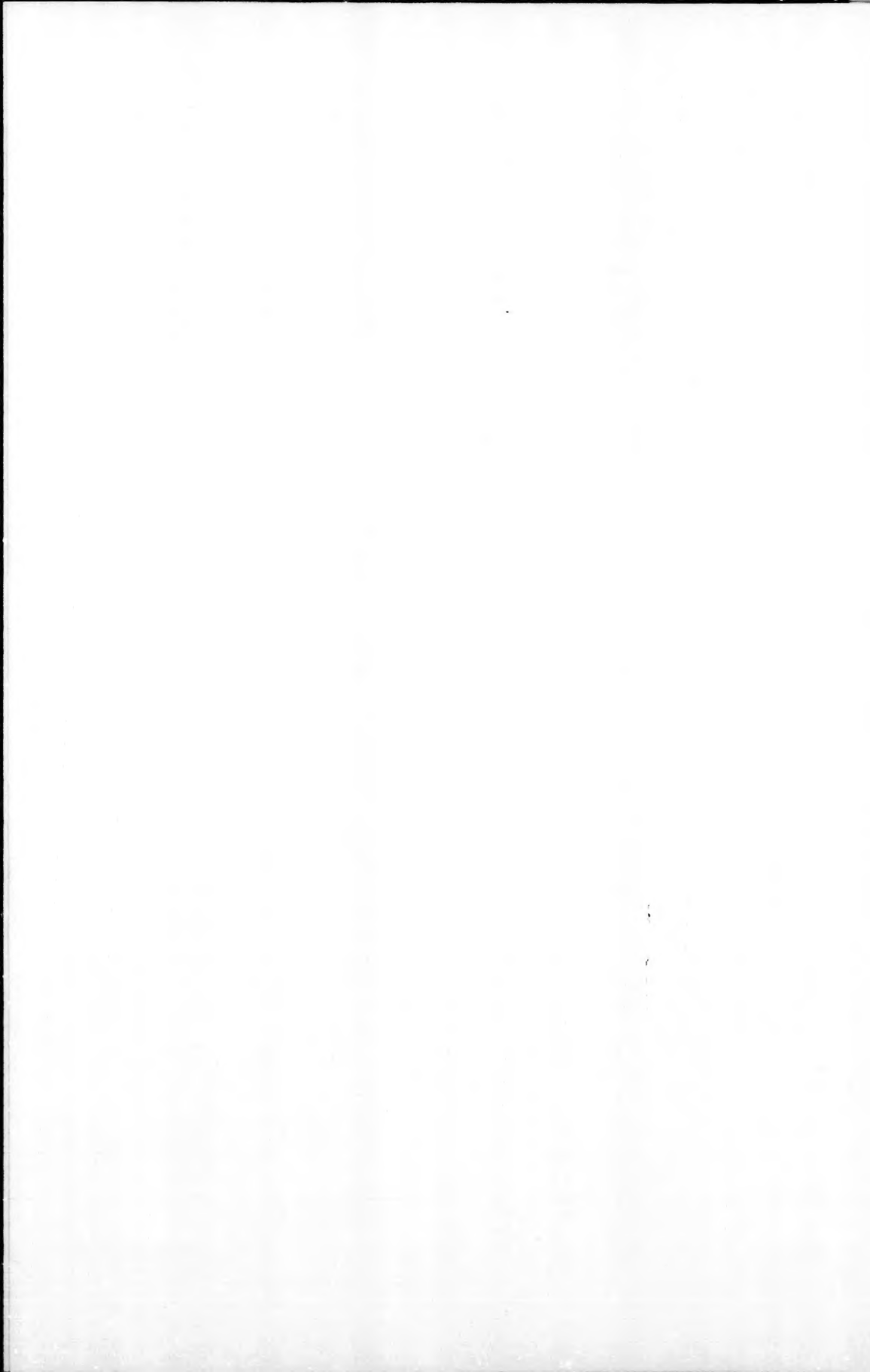






REFORM IN THE EDUCATION OFFICE.

A LETTER

TO THE

HON. OLIVER MOWAT, Q.C., M.P.P.,

ATTORNEY-GENERAL, &c., &c.,

ON THE

GOVERNMENT BOOK DEPOSITORY

IN CONNECTION WITH THE

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT



TORONTO:

PUBLISHED FOR THE BOOK TRADE BY

ADAM, STEVENSON & CO. WHOLESALE BOOKSELLERS.

1874.

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fol.

Adam

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THE EDUCATIONAL DEPOSITORY vs. THE BOOK TRADE.

Extracts from the Chief Superintendent's Annual Report for 1872.

SUMMARY OF OBJECTIONS TO THE EDUCATIONAL DEPOSITORY.

The principal objections urged by Booksellers against the Depository are—

- 1st. That it is an unjust interference with "the trade."
- 2nd. That it creates a "monopoly" injurious to them.
- 3rd. That if the Legislature supplies its schools with books and maps, it ought, on the same principle, to supply other articles.
- 4th. That, even if the arrangement was a wise one in the infancy of the school system, when Booksellers were few, and facilities of supply did not exist, it is indefensible now, when these reasons for its establishment no longer exist.
- 5th. That if "the trade" can (as it does) supply text books, it can also equally well supply library and prize books.
- 6th. That the Depository is an expensive burthen to the Province.

REPLY TO THESE OBJECTIONS.

Although it is difficult to condense replies to general objections like the foregoing, yet we endeavour to do so, as follows:—

1st. That the alleged interference of the Depository with the book trade is the reverse of truth, as the "Trade Returns" will show. It has, on the contrary, largely developed this trade, by sending books into every corner of the land. The value of books (not maps and apparatus) imported into the Province of Ontario in 1850, was \$141,700, and now about \$410,000, while the average import of books by the Department has not been ten per cent. of this latter sum.

2nd. That the Educational Depository exists solely for, and in the interests of the schools alone, and that it has never supplied private parties with books, or interfered with private trade in any way; and that to abandon the principle of the Educational Depository would be either to confer a "monopoly" of high prices upon a few individual Booksellers, or to throw wide open the door to the introduction of all kinds of literature, the bad and the pernicious as well as the good, as can be demonstrated by incontrovertible testimony and examples.*

3rd. That the principle of the Depository is recognized and acted upon without question by the Imperial, Dominion and Provincial Governments, in their Stationery Offices, Queen's Printers, Post-Offices, Army and Navy Supply, etc.

4th. That if the Government, under the authority of the Legislature, has a right to give money and provide trained teachers for the schools, it has also a right to give books and maps to them, and there is not a shadow of difference in the principle of the one gift and the other.

5th. That the entire text-book trade is in the hands of the Booksellers, as the books are all named and known, and no departure from the list can take place; but that with the large and constant influx of new books, no such supervision could take place over the supply by Booksellers of prizes and library books.

6th. That the Depository has fully paid its own way, and has not cost the Province one cent for its management for twenty years.

* NOTE.—Four Reasons why "the Trade" is incompetent to take the place of the Depository in Supplying our Schools.

To the statement that private Booksellers can supply the library wants of the schools as well, or nearly as well, as the Education Department, our reply is four-fold.—

1st. That a Department, specially charged with the care and oversight of the schools, being a disinterested party, must be much better qualified to minister to their wants in these respects than interested parties, who, as a rule, have no other object in view than commercial gain.

2nd. That the experience of Educationists on this subject is, that booksellers, through their agents and travellers throughout the rural parts, have, with some good books, disposed of immense quantities of pernicious and worthless books.

3rd. That if the right of supply is thrown open to booksellers indiscriminately, the bad as well as the good will take advantage of the facilities thus afforded for flooding the country with their own publications without check or restraint. To restrict the right of supply to one or more publishers would be to perpetuate the so-called "monopoly" in its most oppressive and offensive form. If a change be made at all, it must be in the direction of throwing open the right of supply, and giving all vendors alike full permission to circulate such books as they please—bad as well as good.

4th. No private publishing house, even in the cities, could, without having the "monopoly" of supply secured to it, be able to keep more than one-half of the variety of books, maps, charts and apparatus, which would be necessary for circulation in our 5,000 schools. Nor could it supply them at the low prices at which they are now furnished to the trustees.

THE EDUCATIONAL BOOK DEPOSITORY.

A LETTER

TO THE

HONORABLE OLIVER MOWAT, Q.C., M.P.P.,
ATTORNEY-GENERAL, &c.

SIR,

In addition to the points I had the honour of urging upon you at our late interview, I think it well that I should commit to writing a statement of my objections to the maintenance, at the public expense, of the Bookselling Department in the Education Office. Though personally loth to renew the controversy on this subject, I should be false to the interest I profess to feel in the welfare of the native book trade, to the development of which my best years have been devoted, if I hesitated to take advantage of the opportunity afforded by your promised legislation to state my views in some detail.

I shall be glad, Sir, if, in the discussion of the subject, I succeed in removing existing misapprehensions regarding the nature and practical working of the Book Bureau. A plain statement of the facts of the case, however, ungarnished by the fallacious apologies of interested officials, will not only relieve the legitimate trade of the imputations cast upon it, but conclusively establish the truth of my objections upon the broader ground of public convenience and utility.

Before entering upon the subject, I desire to state, once for all, that in objecting to the continuance of the Depository, which, for over twenty years, has been a standing menace to the book trade of the country, I have no desire to speak otherwise than with respect of the reverend gentleman at the head of the Department. In common with men of all parties, I fully appreciate the valuable services Dr. Ryerson has rendered to the cause of popular education in the Province; and although the circumstances of a young country may have lent some countenance to the original establishment of the institu- Personal.

tion to which I take exception, the Chief Superintendent need not be held answerable for its continuance long after it has ceased to be of public benefit, much less for the flagrant abuses—not to say corruption—which have crept into its management. Fortunately, the Chief Superintendent, many years ago, formally assigned the defence of the book-store to the men who have immediate control of its affairs; though it is of course the policy of those who profit by the maintenance of the monopoly to hide themselves behind the head of the Department and the Council of Public Instruction.

The Education Department.

The particular subject of this letter can hardly be discussed to advantage without glancing briefly at the anomalous system adopted in the general conduct of the Education Office. Here, of course, the Chief Superintendent is responsible, to this extent at least—that he has not advised the re-modelling of the entire Department, in accordance with the policy of Administrative reform which now prevails in all other departments of the State. The Education Office is the only branch of the public service which enjoys immunity from Official or Parliamentary inspection. Its accounts are submitted to no proper audit. As forwarded to the Treasurer's Department, they are so manipulated as to make it impossible for the Committee of Public Accounts, the Provincial Auditor, or any other man or body of men, not in possession of the secrets of the Office, to verify or dispute them.

Its Accounts Unaudited.

The Council of Public Instruction.

The Council of Public Instruction, founded from the first on a false basis, is practically as extinct as the English Privy Council Committee on Education. It is a convenient screen for Officials, and its members are rewarded at times for their complaisance with some by no means valueless crumbs which fall from the Official table; but for any worthy purpose it is worse than useless. No record of its proceedings is published; it is even uncertain how often a quorum is got together; and nobody knows how far all, or indeed any, of its members can be held responsible for the regulations promulgated in its name.

Text Books.

In the matter of Text Books, that uniformity which is, no doubt, desirable, within certain limits, is made the pretext for maintaining a number of books, unsuitable, either because better and more recent works have been published, or because they are mere compilations—the work of Officials of the Department—and for the most part worthless, except as a supplementary source of income to the writers themselves. Such valuable series of Educational Works as those from the British publishing houses of Macmillan, Longman, Rivington, Cassell, Nelson and Collins, are excluded, so that the inferior and untrustworthy productions of Officials may be forced upon the Schools. If a publisher, desirous of encouraging native ability, incurs the expense and risk of pub-

lishing a School Book which even the Department approves, the owner of the copyright, whether author or publisher, must surrender it to the Department before he can hope to insure its adoption.* One of the Chief Officials, enjoying the special favour of the Council, actually sold his copyrights to a publisher for a good round sum, but when the caprice or intrigues of those who move the wheels of this machine originated the order for the unconditional sacrifice of their educational property, the same publisher was made to surrender the right he had acquired, virtually, to the Official from whom he had made the purchase. Unwarrantable and unseemly as are such regulations of the Council, I could point to others equally arbitrary and questionable in their character; and in this connection I trust it will not be considered unfair to recall to your attention the facts detailed in the letter of the Hon. Edward Blake (then Premier) to the Chief Superintendent.† The truth seems to be that the selection of the Text Books for the Province is in the hands of a "ring," composed of Departmental Officials and such publishers as are constrained to submit to the unjust demands of the Education Office.

To secure authorization of native text-books, owner of copyright required to cede his right absolutely to Council of Public Instruction.

I have stated that it is impossible to obtain satisfactory information regarding the accounts of the Department in general, and the Book-shop in particular. There is one exception which ought not to be overlooked. I refer to the expenditure under the head "Journal of Education." Here, at any rate, we have some partial evidence of the reckless waste of public money, characteristic of this irresponsible bureau.

Journal of Education.

The figures speak for themselves :

	1870.	1871.	1872.	TOTAL.
Expenditure	\$1,800 00	\$2,370 59	\$2,508 72	\$6,679 31
Receipts	23 76	180 56	264 93	469 25

To state the matter shortly, the receipts for the last three years amount to little more than one-fourteenth of the expenditure. Of the latter, the largest item is, of course, for printing, for which I presume full value is received; but what justification is there for the charge of \$400 per annum, paid as editor to an official who already receives a liberal salary as Deputy Head of the Department, to say nothing of other extra pickings at the public expense? Of course, the apology is that the *Journal* is not intended to be a paying enterprise; it is published

Useless Expenditure upon it.

* The Copyright regulations here criticised may be found in the Annual Report of the Chief Superintendent of 1868, p. 10.

† See Sessional Papers for 1873, No. 72, quoted in the article on "School Administration in Ontario," in the December number of *The Canadian Monthly*.

for the instruction of teachers and trustees, and cannot be expected to be remunerative. This would certainly be a plausible, if not a satisfactory, reason for the expenditure, if the *Journal* adequately fulfilled its purpose. You have only, sir, to take up at random any number of it to satisfy yourself that its publication, as at present conducted, involves a wanton sacrifice of public money. Where it is not a matter of paste and scissors it is nothing but a periodical defence of the Department, or a record of its arbitrary decisions.

What the
Journal ought
to be.

Newspaper editors throw it under the table as worthless, and members of the Legislature have frequently stated on the floor of the House, the low estimation in which it is held by teachers, and how piles of it are to be found littering the Post offices of the country. If instead of the "thing of shreds and patches" which now usurps the name, the *Journal of Education* were a fitting exponent of current thought on its great subject; if it contained the results of practical experience in tuition; if it gave space to the suggestions of Canadian teachers, without regard to the views despotically enforced by the Department; if it detailed the proceedings of the Council, and threw some light upon the dark places of Departmental finance,—if, in short, it were anything but the work of a well-paid officer, who has so many profitable irons in the fire that he can do no more than eke out its departmental ukases with stale clippings from the last month's daily press, no objection would be made for any reasonable difference between its receipts and expenditure. As it is, it is a notable proof of what we shall have to contend for, with less light to guide us, in the sequel—that everything connected with the Department ought to be submitted immediately to searching scrutiny.

The Museum

Another and equally serious source of leakage, in connection with the Department, presents itself in the "Museum," which seems, from the painfully uniform expenditure upon it, through a long series of years, to be an especial object of solicitude and interest to those in charge. Without dissecting its affairs in any detail, let me simply ask what value the public receives for the annual expenditure of nearly \$4,000 upon it? From the loud and widely expressed dissatisfaction of those who have had transactions at the Depository, it would seem that the whole establishment has deteriorated into an antiquated yet costly museum—a sort of locker for the "condemned stores" of the public service. Whatever its usefulness may be, or however its maintenance may contribute to the pastime of stray sight-seers, with the light of the public accounts upon it, this much may be gleaned, that not *one-half* of the annual appropriation can remain a permanent contribution to its treasures, after the perennial tinkering is done by the versatile experts of the Department.

I have introduced these matters as bearing immediately upon the particular branch of the Department, properly the subject of this letter. They make out a *prima facie* case against the entire institution, on the charges of extravagance and incapacity. The defenders of the Depository claim that it is a "paying concern"; if so, it is an exception to the general system of management in the Department, and the burden of proof rests upon them. The required evidence is not forthcoming, for the simple reason, as I think I can prove, that it has no existence.

The Depository.

Like other monopolists, the interested defenders of the Depository are determined to die hard. They have issued—it need hardly be said at the public expense—a pamphlet, of over sixty pages, full of false assumptions and vain iteration. The main points are these:—

Pleas on its behalf.

1. That the clerks of the Depository, being intellectually and morally superior to booksellers, school trustees, teachers, and the great bulk of the community, ought to be the sole judges of what books are suitable for libraries and prizes. If the moral censorship were once relaxed, and the book-shop closed, the Province would "throw wide open the door to the introduction of all kinds of literature—the bad and pernicious as well as the good." To be worth anything, this paternal system of administration ought to be extended so as to protect the people at large from adulterated goods by setting up bakeries, groceries, and dairies of its own; it ought to protect them from "pernicious literature" by establishing a government licensing office, without whose stamp no book could be issued; it ought to educate their taste, as a writer of France—the great stronghold of centralization—suggests, by supplying good music and excluding the bad;* might it not with equal force claim a

1. The Moral Censorship claimed.

Extension of the Paternal Principle.

* How far the present rulers of France are prepared to carry the system, upon which alone the Depository can be justified, will be seen from the provisions of a Bill introduced by M. Depeyre, President McMahon's Minister of Justice. I quote from the *PALL MALL GAZETTE*:—"This Bill will enact that no one shall be allowed to keep a bookseller's shop without having obtained either a patent, which is to be procured from the Minister of the Interior, or an authorization from the prefect of his department. The applicant must, in addition, state the name of the place where he intends to exercise his calling, produce a register of his birth to prove that he is more than twenty-one years of age, and furnish a certificate to the effect that his moral conduct is beyond reproach, and that he is able to read and write. Nor is this all. After he has satisfied the "authorities" that he is not a returned convict, or worse, he will only be permitted to sell such works as have received the official stamp, together with school books and the periodicals which are allowed to circulate in the streets and kiosques. For selling works not included in this category, he will be liable to a fine varying from a hundred to a thousand francs, and to a term of imprisonment of not less than a fortnight or more than a twelvemonth. It is scarcely possible to believe that even in the present Assembly a majority will be found to support so Draconian a measure; but if it should become law the friends of "moral order" will have added yet another to the long list of blunders which it will be the first business of the next Assembly to undo." The Duc de Broglie and his Government are, at least, consistent in the application of Legitimist traditions—which is more than can be affirmed of the Ontario Department of Education.

moral censorship of the press? Who knows what marvellous changes might come over our daily newspapers if no article could issue till it had passed this critical bureau of public morals and Canadian letters!

If the principle be sound, there ought to be no limit to its application. If booksellers, whose morality is, at least, on a level with that of their neighbours, and if school trustees and teachers, who are presumably men of honest and pure intentions and of ordinary mental capacity, imperil their reputations by "corrupting the youth;" what must be the general tone of Canadian society? If whole classes have entered into a conspiracy to injure their neighbours, is it not the obvious duty of our rulers to treat the entire population as children, to be protected in a fatherly manner from ignorance, folly and vice?

Intellectual
judgment of
the Depository.

2. The Depository is, it appears, the sole means by which "a sound and varied literature" can be disseminated. The officials—for it is absurd to speak of the Council as performing the duty,—alone possess adequate knowledge united, of course, with inflexible moral purpose, for the accomplishment of the work. If the legitimate dealers in books were permitted to share in the business, the clerks, already overwhelmed with their proper work, to say nothing of highly remunerative occupations they provide for themselves, would be burdened with the duty of making out a new catalogue every two or three months. This, of course, would be a hardship, from the official point of view; because, being in the ordinary routine, it could not figure in the contingencies. But they manage matters more comfortably at present. The last catalogue of library and prize books issued by the Department for the guidance of trustees and others, bears the date of 1868. So that, for a period of over five years, in an age of unprecedented mental activity, the Department has been fast asleep.

How it publishes lists of the most recent works.

I have not the temerity, Sir, to contrast with this "masterly inaction" the doings of the legitimate book-trade of the country during this period, and in departments more varied and important than are ever dreamt of in the Depository; but I may be permitted to say, that it is within the sphere of probability that the 1868 list itself might not have made its appearance, but for the secret auction sale at Montreal which cleared away the rubbish that had encumbered the shelves of the Depository for years. Of this furtive auction sale, and the loss to the public resulting from bad business management and personal irresponsibility, I do not think, Sir, you will find any record in the Public Accounts.

Irrelevant
opinions
quoted.

3. A flourish of trumpets is, of course, made over a mass of letters from the United States and from the School Inspectors of Ontario, the collection and publication of which, at the public expense, with other like defensive matter, should make every

tax-payer in the country wince. From this book of "Home and Foreign correspondence," if you have leisure to examine it, you will learn little, Sir, that bears upon the question. So far as the American letters go, they merely tend to support the view that there ought to be some supervision exercised over the choice of books—not that the Government ought to maintain a book-shop. The letters of the Inspectors relate to the maintenance of the 100 per cent. grant, of which they unanimously approve. No support is given to the book-shop at all—and two of them, more outspoken than their colleagues, the Rev. James Porter, of Toronto, (see p. 53) and Dr. Comfort, of St. Catharines, (p. 61,) have had the moral courage to denounce the entire system. There is a richness about the reply to the latter gentleman characteristic of the Department; I beg to call your attention specially to it. The fact is, Sir, that the circular sent to the Inspectors was intended to operate like a "first warning" to the French journals, to enforce obedience to bureaucratic demands, either by silence on vexed questions, or by unconditional support of equivocal measures. To their honour be it said, many of the Inspectors preferred the former alternative. Two of them, in their innocence, frankly gave their opinions in full, one of whom the Department rebukes in the words of the reply above referred to:—"The list was not sent to you for that purpose." Dr. Comfort supposed that the circular was issued to obtain information; he was not so wise as some of his brethren whom the Department addressed again and again without effect—and who only satisfied its importunity by evading the irksome task set before them.

Dealings with
the Inspectors.

Two additional pleas offered by the Department may be taken together, because they are mutually destructive, the one of the other. In the first place we are informed that the "alleged interference with the book trade is the reverse of the truth, as the Trade Returns show." A few lines further on, the writer admits the "interference" and attempts to justify it on the ground, that were it not for the Bureau, the booksellers would have a "monopoly of high prices"—in other words, that the trade would gain some portion of the public money which now goes into the pockets of officials, or is otherwise wasted on the Depository. The distinction attempted to be drawn between "private" and public trade is untenable. A business conducted with advantage to the public by individuals, is, in all its branches "private" to this extent—that Government interference, or competition with it, is a wanton and unjustifiable violation of *private* rights.

Interference
with Trade.

Let me for the sake of argument admit the charge constantly reiterated against booksellers of "selfish" aims and "interested" motives in their attacks upon the Depository; and what does it amount to after all? If an injustice is done them by the existence of this Departmental trading concern, have they not a

The "selfish"
plea.

right to expect the sympathy of the public, when they protest against its continuance? Has any one of the large class of legal, political, and economical grievances, redressed during the present century, been exposed to public indignation otherwise than by the representations of what are called "interested parties"? Have not these parties been invariably accused of "selfishness," and has not the charge been successfully retorted upon monopolists, official or otherwise?

Nay further, has it not been clearly demonstrated, after the triumph of the injured class, that the people at large have proved by far the greatest gainers from the removal of any obstacle to freedom of thought or action? The selfish men concerned are those who, contrary to the public interest, desire the continuance of an institution maintained at the public expense—solely for their own advantage.

Imperial and
Canadian
precedents
adduced.

5. It is claimed that the Stationery Office, the Queen's Printing Offices, the Army and Navy Supply, and the Telegraph System in England, exist upon the same principle as that which justifies the Depository. It seems scarcely necessary to insist that, in every case, the analogy is defective. As the argument, however, is a favourite one with the officials of the Depository, and one upon which much stress is laid, I shall here reply to it at more length than I should otherwise have deemed necessary, though in doing so, I cover ground over which I have already gone in a trade organ published by my Firm.

Irrelevant in
every case.

To begin with, the Stationery and Queen's Printing Offices are supplied by contract *with the trade*, and are only under Government for the purpose of audit—in both of which respects they differ from the Amateur Book-shop. The apologist for the latter asserts that the maps, &c. are obtained by "tender"—a statement which has no justification, except by a disingenuous application of the word. You have only to refer to the Public Accounts, Sir, to satisfy yourself that no advertisement for tenders is ever issued, and that the parties who take upon themselves the duties of constructing and reconstructing maps, colouring and mounting them, are not troubled by the fear of successful competition.

The Post Office exists on grounds of public convenience and security, and does not interfere with any branch of trade. The Army and Navy supply of clothing, arms, &c., is so gigantic in its proportions, that nothing short of a huge corporation could undertake the task satisfactorily. There are many reasons why the Government should choose the less of two evils, by taking the matter into its own hands. This step is not an interference with the legitimate clothing trade at all; but merely a *dernier resort* forced upon the War Department by the jobbery of large contractors. Where individual merchants can perform the work as well or better, the Imperial Govern-

ment acts upon the sound principle of non-interference. It does not compel the officers to purchase uniforms from a Government shop-shop which can "undersell" the army tailor only by drawing upon the Treasury; and although a large sum is annually voted for library purposes in both branches of the service, there is no Government book concern. Moreover, the Under-Secretary for War does not make perquisites in the Supply Department by cutting out coats; nor do any of his subordinates figure in the contingencies as engaged in the sewing on of regimental buttons. The work, after all, is done by tailors, and not by clerks. The clothing establishment is avowedly an experiment and, to judge from the Army Estimates, a very costly and unsatisfactory one. Whether it will ultimately prove a failure or not is a matter of "selfish" interest to the British tax-payer; in either case it was not established on the "principle of the Depository." The Telegraph Purchase is justified upon the same general ground as the Post Office, with the additional reason that in case of invasion or other national emergency, it is important that so powerful an agency should be in the hands of the Government. Here again the parallel fails; and even if it were relevant, the monopolists should not conceal the fact that the first year of Departmental Telegraph Management was rendered memorable chiefly by the misappropriation of funds to the amount of two millions sterling!

You will not fail to have observed, Sir, that although the Imperial Government buys or contracts, or even manufactures, it does not sell. Its stationery and printing are contracted for *with the trades* for the use of those in their employ and for no others. Even the Clothing Establishment, although it provides a prescribed style and quality of dress, under proper supervision, only furnishes the uniform to those in its pay—those, in fact, who receive their clothing as part payment of wages. In short, the English system wants entirely the essential characteristics of the Depository system, which comprise, amongst other things, an entire absence of supervision, an entire impunity for official peculation, and entire ignorance of the trade in which they are professedly engaged.

If the Depository confined its operation to the supply of purely professional works for the information of teachers, there would still be ground for complaint, because of the limited information regarding books which is a marked feature of the Department. Teachers themselves prefer to deal with the bookseller in their neighbourhood, without any fear that he would prefer "commercial gain" to an honest recommendation of the best books on scholastic work; because they know that the bookseller's business is in a great degree dependent upon the extent of his knowledge of books, and upon his honesty in recommending the best and most suitable to the wants of his customer. The analogies suggested by the De-

Non-interference, where possible, the ruling principle.

Home Government does not "under-sell" the Traders.

The Depository does not confit itself to Schools.

partment fail from every point of view. They profess, by dipping their hands into the public funds, not only to supply their employees proper with the necessary equipment for the duty the State pays them to perform, but to provide also, in addition to School Libraries, for "Free Public Lending Libraries," for "a library for any Public Institution, for the use of the inmates; or in the County Jail, for the use of the prisoners." To which may be added Sunday School and Church Libraries, for the supply of which they also put forth a deceptive bid. Perhaps they will reconcile the statement that they only supply the schools for which they provide teachers, with the fact that they endeavour to intrude with a bribe upon institutions unconnected with Public or High Schools.

A better
parallel sug-
gested.

It is easy to furnish the parallel they have vainly sought in Provincial and Imperial establishments. Let us suppose that the Law Society, the Medical Board or the Medical Schools were to take up the ground that, having trained those who fill the ranks of their respective professions, they ought to supply every lawyer and every doctor with the soundest and most recent learning on technical subjects; and further to offer them inducements—from the public funds—to make purchases from a law or medical book depository—what would the professions and the public say to it? We must cover the ground by the further supposition that, not content with asserting this claim, these Institutions desired to monopolize likewise the book-purchases of the clients and patients of those they had licensed to practice in law and medicine. This is, of course, a *reductio ad absurdum*; but if you consider that the Depository does not confine its trading to its own officials, even including the teachers, but stretches it so far as to embrace all the ratepayers and their children, whenever they are united for a general municipal purpose, I think you will admit that the parallel is complete.

Objections to
the Depository.

From a consideration of the pleas offered in defence of the Depository, I proceed to the positive side of the argument. The objections I propose to urge upon your attention will naturally arrange themselves under two heads—the economical, strictly so called, and the commercial aspects of the subject.

1. Its antagonism to the maxims of Political Economy.

It seems scarcely necessary to insist at any length upon the fact that "the principle of the Depository" is diametrically opposed to the maxims of Political Economy. The one favours the obsolete paternal system; the other reprobates and has well nigh destroyed it. The one defends official "meddling and muddling"; the other plants itself upon the sound principle of non-interference. The one would cripple individual enterprise by trading with public money; the other would leave it to the free play of demand and supply. The one preaches monopoly, the other open competition. At all points there is unpromising antagonism. From Adam Smith to John Stuart

Mill, the economists are unanimously in favour of the view for which I am contending. A few quotations on the subject will therefore suffice.

Authorities on the subject quoted.

(a.) The general principle of non-interference :—

McCulloch.

"It cannot, however, be too strongly or too often impressed upon those in authority, that non-interference ought to be the leading principle of their policy, and interference the exception only; that, in all ordinary cases, individuals should be left to shape their conduct according to their own judgment and discretion; and that no interference should ever be made on any speculative or doubtful grounds, but only when its necessity is apparent, or when it can be clearly made out that it will be productive of public advantage. The maxim *laissez le gouverneur* should never be absent from the recollection of legislators or ministers. Whenever they set to regulating, they are treading a path encompassed with difficulties; and while they advance with extreme caution, they should be ready to stop the moment they do not see the way clearly before them and are not urgently impelled, by a sense of public duty, to go forward."—R. G. McCulloch.

Dangers of Government regulation or interference.

(b.) The folly of Government production and trading :—

J. B. Say.

"A Government must act by deputy, by the intermediate agency of a set of people, whose interest is in direct opposition to its own; and they will, of course, attend to their own in preference. If it be so circumstanced as to be invariably cheated in its bargains, there is no need to multiply the opportunities of fraud by engaging itself in production and adventure; that is to say, embarking in concerns that must infinitely multiply the occasions of bargaining with individuals."—Jean Baptiste Say.

The public always cheated when Government engages in trading.

(c.) General Economical objections :—

J. S. Mill.

"The great majority of things are worse done by the intervention of Government, than the individuals most interested in the matter would do them, or cause them to be done, if left to themselves. The grounds of this truth are expressed with tolerable exactness in the popular dictum, that people understand their own business and their own interests better, and care for them more, than the Government does, or can be expected to do. This maxim holds good throughout the greatest part of the business of life, and wherever it is true we ought to condemn every kind of Government intervention that conflicts with it. The inferiority of Government agency, for example, in any of the common operations of industry or commerce, is proved by the fact, that it is hardly ever able to maintain itself in equal competition with individual agency, where the individuals possess the requisite degree of industrial enterprise and can command the necessary assemblage of means. It is evident that Government, by excluding or even superseding individual agency, either substitutes a less qualified instrumentality for one better qualified, or at any rate substitutes its own mode of accomplishing the work, for all the variety of modes which would be tried by a number of equally qualified persons aiming at the same end; a competition by many degrees more propitious to improvement than any uniformity of system."—J. S. Mill.

The people interested are the best judges of their own business.

Government cannot compete on equal terms with individual agency.

Reason. Competition better than uniformity.

Passing from the economists let me mention the names of the Lord Bishop of Manchester,* Mr. Goldwin Smith, and

The Bishop of Manchester, Mr. Goldwin Smith,

* With their usual penchant for wriggling out of a difficulty, the officials attempt to break the force of the Rev. Mr. Porter's reference to Bishop Fraser's denunciation of the Depository* by arguing that "Dr. Fraser was entirely mistaken in sup-

* See page 54 of "Opinions of Experienced Educationists," issued by the Department.

Mr. Herbert
Spencer.

Mr. Herbert Spencer—all of whom have spoken with equal emphasis on the subject. I cannot resist the temptation to quote Mr. Spencer's words :—

"In those modes of thought we have been contemplating, there is a tacit supposition that a Government moulded by themselves, has some efficiency beyond that naturally possessed by a certain group of citizens. True, if you ask them, they may not deliberately assert that a legislative and administrative apparatus can exert power, either mental or material, beyond the power proceeding from the nation itself. They are compelled to admit, when cross-examined, that the energies moving a governmental machine are energies which would cease were citizens to cease working and furnishing the supplies. But nevertheless, their projects imply an unexpressed belief in some store of force that is not measured by taxes. When there arises the question—Why does not Government do this for us? there is not the accompanying thought—Why does not Government put its hands in our pockets, and, with the proceeds, pay officials to do this, instead of leaving us to do it ourselves? but the accompanying thought is—Why does not Government, out of its inexhaustable resources, yield us this benefit?"
—*The Study of Sociology*, c. I.

Fallacy regarding the power and functions of Government.

The Depository an embodiment of the fallacy.

The Book-trade "protected" against.

2. The business view of the subject.

How not to do it.

The Depository is an attempt to carry the fallacy which Mr. Spencer exposes into active operation; for it gives a favourable answer to the requests of the ignorant or unreflecting. One more point, Sir, and I leave this branch of the subject. Whatever may be thought of the demand for protection to native industry, there is one principle which no one will dispute—that Government ought not to discriminate *against* any native enterprise. Yet that is exactly what it does, so long as the Depository is maintained, so that at present the Canadian Book-trade enjoys the expensive luxury of being the only branch of business which the people are "protected against." Here only is individual energy directly discouraged by the expenditure of public money. Do you think, Sir, we have no cause of complaint?

I pass now to the facts connected with the business aspect of the question. If any one acquainted with public institutions, were asked for the best Canadian illustration of that great principle of the Circumlocution Office—"How not to do it," he would single out the Depository without a moment's hesitation. If a young man about to enter upon a mercantile life desires to know how business ought *not* to be conducted, he should be referred to the same Institution. To use the words of Junius, it may be offered as a "negative instruction" to the commercial world—"not a pattern to imitate, but an example to deter." The Depository is, in short, a notable illustration of the truth

posing that the Canadian system was that which had been adopted by the English Privy Council Committee." If so, the mistake was a fortunate one for the Department; for had he known the real character of the Depository, His Lordship would have used much stronger language. It is sufficient for the purpose that the Imperial Government having abandoned a vicious system, has not returned to it in the aggravated form which prevails here. It is the principle and not the form which has been condemned.

insisted on by the economists—that when government departments transcend their proper functions, and undertake work for which they are unfitted, the inevitable results are—inefficiency, extravagance, and public loss. There are, of course, exceptions to most general rules, and the officials claim that the book-bureau is one of these. They even protest their willingness to be judged by ordinary business tests. Be it so; let them be examined upon the ground they have chosen for themselves.

The Depository tried by a commercial standard.

By a confusion in thought, natural under the circumstances, these gentlemen appear to imagine that a respectable education and a general acquaintance with books are the sole requisites for a successful prosecution of the book trade. They fail to distinguish between the educational value of books and their treatment as a commercial commodity—much as a man would do, who, having drunk tea for many years, should imagine himself fully equipped with a knowledge of the grocery trade. It is quite true that the better a man is educated, and the more extensive his range of reading, the more likely he is to succeed in a trade like ours: but the highest intellect, polished by the finest culture, would be of little avail if it were not united with what I may be permitted to call—business intelligence. How far the authorities of the book-shop possess this qualification, I shall proceed to show.

Ignorance in trade matters.

During the past fifteen years the book-trade has been passing into a new phase of existence. Slowly and silently, amidst many discouragements, it has extended its ramifications into every part of the Dominion. The Canadian market, which English publishers used to despise, is regularly visited by many of the British publishers, while representatives of the native importing houses are annually to be found in the London markets. Hence the relations subsisting between English and Canadian houses are as intimate as those between London or Edinburgh and any provincial town. The result has been the introduction and circulation here of the best and latest products of English thought—the cultivation of a literary taste—and the birth of something like a national literature. The part which the bookseller has taken in this intellectual revolution has scarcely been less important than that of the professional instructor. The duty of studying the progress both of intellectual work abroad and of literary needs at home, as well as the task of drawing upon the one and stimulating the other, has been mainly performed by members of the book-trade. In the selection of private and public libraries, in the recommendation of the best works, in the preparation of periodic lists and catalogues of such, and frequently in the re-publication, at great cost and often without the hope of any adequate return, of the higher literature of Britain, the work of the bookseller has been, in every way, a public advantage. Yet, as if to show their utter ignorance of the extent of the trade and the amount

The progress of the Book-trade.

of enterprize and labour expended upon it, the Depository officials tell us that they themselves "have largely developed it"!

How the Depository purchases.

Let us now investigate the Depository system of carrying on the business, first in the matter of purchase, then that of sale. The officials have but little direct dealings with the great publishers of England; they are by no means currently *en rapport* with them; and they have scarcely any personal business contact with their houses. They purchase mainly through what M. Say deprecates under the name of "an intermediate agency"—a commission merchant in fact, who knows little of the books purchased or of the wants of the country to which he sends them. He ships them off as so much merchandize, with a view to the percentage, just as he does the plate-glass, frames, and stationery he provides for the Department. In this manner the shelves of the Depository are furnished with "a sound and varied" supply of books.

How the Depository sell.

The book-shop cannot, of course, sell what it has not got. Consequently, if a large portion of its stock consists of what is mainly purchased at second-hand, and by an inexperienced buyer, the corporations purchasing here must suffer, and must necessarily often be dissatisfied. Complaints, loud, frequent, and from many quarters, are often heard of the rubbish sent in response to orders. The "selection," where the purchasers are not wise enough to insist upon a choice, seems to be "the nearest to hand," and no doubt taken from the biggest pile. It is within my knowledge that school authorities have, in some cases, brought the worthless stock to local booksellers that it might, if possible, be exchanged for something better. It is true that, in the first instance, municipalities may order such books as are in the 1868 catalogue by name; but if they are "not in stock," the clerks "select;" if these are returned, they again "select," and so on to the end of the chapter. Money once remitted, however, is never returned. In this manner the Depository circulates "a sound and varied" supply of books.

Does the Depository pay? If so, how?

It is asserted that the Depository is "a paying concern"—a statement hardly credible in the face of facts detailed in the public accounts; though were the statement true, it would be nothing to boast of, considering that the institution has always been permitted to draw, without check or audit, on the public purse. The system of departmental book-keeping is so elastic that, for aught I know their assertion may be susceptible of quasi-proof. It may be that the result of my calculations may not agree with the balancing-feats of officials, to whom such items as rent, taxes, interest on and depreciation of stock, margin for bad debts, losses on publication account, &c &c are visionary charges which never disturb the serenity of the amateur shop-keeping. However, having ventured, as an exponent of the grievances of which the trade complains, to investigate the

subject, I must be permitted to do it in my own way. It is possible that I do not fully appreciate the mental strain which results from the overwhelming burdens duty and conscience impose upon our zealous officials, yet I cannot help thinking that the Depository would be all the better for a little less of pretension, and a little more of thrift. In the public interest, at all events, it is obviously expedient that a Department which, in all its branches, annually disposes of nearly half a million of public money, should be subject to a more searching supervision than that of its administrative chief.*

Let me now call your attention, Sir, to the figures which represent the respective earnings and expenses of the Depository for the past few years—not to go back to the “good old times”—the halcyon days, when no Local Government existed to disturb the tranquillity of official repose. I take the earnings first. The receipts from sales of Library and Prize Books, Maps, Apparatus etc, were as follows :—

Earnings and
Expenses of
the Depository.

1870.....	\$22,275 54
1871.....	24,770 76
1872.....	33,824 28

The expenses, covering Salaries and Contingencies for the same years, were :—

1870.....	\$4,483 27
1872.....	4,975 00
1872.....	5,955 95

It is proper to state that the sums under the first of these heads do not represent the entire business of the Depository, because they do not represent the annual outlay by the Province for the purchases of the Bureau.

The difference, which does not affect the calculation I desire to make of the relative cost and earnings of the Depository, is accounted for by the loss incurred in the 100 per cent. grant to purchasers. The figures are the proper gross earnings, and against them we must set the gross expenses of management, &c., which, as they stand above, are evidently 20 per cent. of the receipts. The sums in the several years are made up (1) of the salaries of a clerk of libraries, and *nine* other clerks and messengers to handle a business of say \$25,000; together with (2) the contingencies. Yet, astounding as such an expenditure

* Edmund Burke, in his speech on Economical Reform, exactly touches such financial management as that of the Depository :—“All subordinate treasuries, as the nurseries of mismanagement, and as naturally drawing to themselves as much money as they can, keeping it as long as they can, and accounting for it as late as they can, ought to be dissolved.” He also virtually sanctions the attitude of the book-trade, in urging upon Government the duty of “engaging with persons of skill in the subject matter, and with those who shall have an immediate and direct interest in the proper execution of the business.”

Edmund
Burke.

appears, there are other items which ought to be added:—Rent or interest on the capital sunk in the premises occupied, lighting, interest on capital invested, losses by depreciation of stock, taxes and insurance, besides a proportion of the salaries of the Deputy Superintendent for supervision and management of the Departmental accountant for services exacted from him, and of the Clerks of Records and Correspondence who are also pressed into the service. These various items would absorb fully \$2000 additional every year, properly chargeable to the Depository as expenses—making a total of *twenty-five per cent* of the gross earnings! The Province is to be congratulated on the fact that, in return for an expenditure so disproportionate to the receipts that it would overwhelm any business man in hopeless bankruptcy, we have that priceless boon—a moral and literary censorship.

Expenses disproportionate to the returns

How the "private interests" of the officials are cared for.

Permit me now, Sir, to show you how carefully the Depository caters for "private interests" and how favourably "the martyrs for a cause" contrast with the "few booksellers whose only object is gain" in assailing the Bureau. In the Departmental Report for 1869 the Chief Superintendent naively informs us that "in the preparation of maps, there was no one connected with the Department who could either engrave or print or frame them, I therefore got most of them coloured by skilful persons in the families of gentlemen connected with the Department." This singularly fortunate, perhaps I ought to say fortuitous, discovery of native talent was certainly worthy of "Happy Thought Hall." Speaking of the Clerk of Libraries, the Chief Superintendent says:—"His talents are highly versatile and of a peculiar kind." It is satisfactory to find from the Public Accounts that this handy official has not concealed his light under a bushel. During the last ten years or more he has received, in addition to his salary, of \$1,200 per annum, an average of \$600 for colouring maps, &c., on the basis of an estimate by Messrs. Maclear & Co., so far back as 1863. The estimate has never been revised since, nor has the map colouring been submitted to public tender for ten years. Whilst upon this subject I may mention that, during the same period the map mounting and engraving, on which thousands of dollars are annually expended, have never been subject to public competition.

Supplementary income of the Deputy Superintendent.

Ascending higher in the scale of this comfortable branch of the Civil Service, the Deputy Superintendent has managed, during the past three years to supplement his two salaries—as Deputy and Editor of the *Journal*—by an annual sum of \$600 for reconstructing maps and colouring done by himself or members of his family—making altogether the handsome total of \$3,200 per annum.

Full play is not given to the versatility of the Deputy in these degenerate times; let me attempt, therefore, to do him

justice by cataloguing a few of the flowers "that bloomed for him in happier days." In 1864 \$1,400 as back pay for seven years "management and making purchases for the Depository at the rate of \$200 per year;" \$400 annually for editing and conducting the *Journal of Education*; \$100 per year as Recording Clerk to the Council of Public Instruction; \$100 per year as Lecturer on School Law; besides intermittent charges of a respectable amount for such services as the following:—Construction and Revision of Maps, for Colouring the same, for Editing Grammar and Common School Manuals, for Revising Tablet Sheet Lessons for the Printer, for preparing Merit Cards for the Lithographer, &c., &c. Indeed, so numerous and miscellaneous are the services for which the Deputy Superintendent has drawn upon the Depository, that his salary seems to have constituted an inferior source of income. The "retainer," it is true, was large; but the periodical "refreshers" have been the main stay of this disinterested public officer. The long list of perquisites above noted has been unmercifully dealt with, and as no publisher is likely, in future, to purchase the copyright of an official's text-books with the prospect of finding them afterwards claimed as an asset of the Department, that spring of revenue has also been dried up. Perhaps it would be unjust to assume that the abandonment of some of the salaries received by the pluralist has been occasioned by outside pressure. It may, after all, have been due to the inward promptings of a sensitive nature—so that, like the teacher, whose act of restitution was announced through the daily press a few weeks since, the Deputy has surrendered some of his good things for conscience' sake.

Another remarkable feature in the management of the Depository is the manner in which its patronage is bestowed—I cannot say distributed. Having the public purse at their command and no fear of audit before their eyes, the officials, here as elsewhere, distribute their favours to the most friendly and accommodating of their acquaintances. We are not surprised to find a family compact without, as well as within, the walls of the Institution. Passing over the very considerable item of \$11,000 paid during the last three years to a protégé of the Department for Map-mounting without previous advertisement for tenders, we come to a choice illustration of the Depository system of doing business. As there are families "of gentlemen connected with the Department" who can construct and colour maps, so, by a very fortunate coincidence, there are several branches of a family outside, in which the Department has happily discovered a similar combination of "versatile" ability. During the last three years, according to the Public Accounts, some \$16,000 found their way into the pockets of this family. One of them, though only a printer in the British metropolis, could select and purchase Books, Stationery, Frames and Plate Glass; he is Commission Agent and Forwarder-General to the

The Patronage of the Department.

Another Family compact.

Expense and
inefficiency of
the "interme-
diate agency"
in London.

Extravagance
in printing.

The 100 per
cent. grant
and the proper
control over
book-selec-
tion can be
provided
without the
existence of
the Deposi-
tory.

Depository. Then there is another employed in furnishing the Museum and Library with their commodities; and a third whose peculiar gifts lie in supplying all manner of Instruments, Mathematical or otherwise, Brass-rods, Brackets, &c., upon which two or more commissions must necessarily have been paid. It should be noted here that the favourite of this happy trio who is engaged as English Commissioner, judging from the character of his shipments and the prices at which the goods are bought, must lack qualification for his responsible duties, yet he, doubtless, is paid his margin on them, and his appointment places the Bureau at a direct disadvantage as compared with the trade. I may add that this agent is also permitted to export stationery for the special uses of the Depository and Education Office, contrary, I believe, to the rule of the Treasury Department which requires that all Stationery in Government Offices shall be obtained from the Office of the Queen's Printer.* There are other disbursements of this irresponsible Bureau, showing undue preference in the disposal of patronage, which are very frequently to be met with in the Departmental charges of the Public Accounts. I refer to the items under Painting, Glazing, Plastering, Plumbing, to an extravagant and apparently needless extent—to say nothing of Printing, &c., beyond all bounds of reason. In the last of these, especially, the abuse of official privilege is notorious. Not content with the publication of an Annual Report of over 300 pages, and of which, I believe, some 7000 copies are printed—in itself a piece of useless extravagance—the Department has felt itself entitled to send to press anything that comes in its head—correspondence, apologies and defences innumerable. No sooner does the fit seize the officials, than they immediately rush into print without regard to cost. They do not pay for it, of course; it is only an expensive amusement provided for out of the pockets of the people. So far as the Depository is concerned, a first step in its reformation—if it be not idle to talk of reforming an Institution whose very existence is indefensible—is the abolition of contingencies to officials, the abolition of nepotism, the establishment of public competition by sealed tender for all important works or extensive purchases under its control, and some direct Governmental supervision over all its expenditures.

Having thus briefly surveyed the business aspect of the Depository, without by any means exhausting the theme, I desire to impress upon your mind two considerations which may possibly be lost sight of. The one is that the one hundred per cent. grant may be continued though the Depository should be abolished; the other—that the existence of the Depository has nothing to do with the Council's supervision over the selection of

* Stationery to the amount of \$1,158.11 was exported in 1872 by this agent for the use of the Education Office and Depository. See Public Accounts for that year, pages 96-97.

Books and Maps—which could be maintained equally well, if not better, without it. It is the policy of officials to confuse the public mind by ignoring the distinction between Government aid and supervision on the one hand, and amateur book-selling on the other. There is, in fact, no necessary connection between them.

It may be well, Sir, to sum up here the ground I have traversed in this letter. In the first place I endeavoured to meet and controvert the pleas urged in behalf of the Depository—a task, I call to mind, my predecessor in business, so long ago as 1859, was able to accomplish. The claims put forth, of moral and intellectual superiority—absurd as they are in themselves—were shown to have no bearing on the question. Ignorant selection, as well as the supposed danger to public morality are both guarded against by required sanction of all books by the Council. The opinions of the Inspectors, so far as they approved of the system, were confined to an earnest plea in favour of the 100 per cent. grant. On the other hand, the American opinions, based upon a state of society of which we have no experience, were testimonials in favour of Government supervision, not of Government bookselling. I then proceeded to show that the Depository is a monopoly, and that if, as they allege, they have not seriously injured the Book-trade, it has been from want of power and not from want of will. The claim to provide Prize and Library Books on the plea that the Department had trained the teachers, was met by an examination of the precedents adduced by the officials—all of which were obviously irrelevant. Taking up the positive side of the argument, I demonstrated the fact that “the principle of the Depository” is untenable on economical or philosophic grounds. Having thus proved that it was theoretically indefensible, I proceeded to show its failure in practice. The business view included a brief survey of the purchasing agency—incapable, careless and extravagant; the system of sale, inefficient and unsatisfactory; the disproportionate amount of expenditure; the exorbitant remuneration of officials, not so much by actual salary, as by a system of picking at the public expense; and finally, the disbursement of immense sums of money to favourites for work done and purchases made which ought, on every principle of sound business management, to be submitted to public competition.

I trust, Sir, that after the earnest consideration which I am sure you will devote to the subject, you will agree with me that the Book Depository ought to be at once abolished. It has outlived its usefulness, and, like all effete Institutions, has become an incubus upon the Department; inefficient in itself, it causes inefficiency in the whole system; carelessness and jobbing here are spreading by contagion throughout the Department. It is at once a burden on the public, a hindrance to the trade, and a reproach to the admirable system of Government established in

Summary.

Recommendations.

The Depository should be abolished.

Suggestions
offered.

the Province. All this you will probably admit, and yet you may not feel justified in taking so radical a step at once. In that case, I respectfully offer the following suggestions:—

1. That the supply of books and maps shall be thrown open to the trade on the terms at present enjoyed and monopolized by the Depository.

2. That it be made the duty of the Department to publish yearly a catalogue of all books and maps sanctioned by the Council, with supplementary lists monthly or quarterly, during the year,—and with such prices affixed as will not prevent the trade competing with the Depository.

3. That the Council of Public Instruction be entirely remodelled and its proceedings published, including the *yeas* and *nays* on any controverted question.

4. That during the provisional maintenance of the Depository, the entire system of engraving, book-purchasing, book-selling, map-colouring, mounting, &c., together with all important matters of work or purchase shall be exchanged for that of public competition by sealed tender.

5. That, with a view to a better supervision of the entire Department, the Education Office, the present state of the stock in the Depository, and all other matters connected with the Bureau, be immediately made the subject of a searching Governmental inquiry, and be submitted hereafter to periodical Government inspection.

In conclusion, Sir, I beg to thank you for the opportunity afforded me of expressing the views of the trade. Relying upon your aid in reforming a great abuse, and redressing a great wrong, and apologizing for the extreme length of this communication.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

With much respect,

Your obedient servant,

G. MERCER ADAM,

(Firm of Adam, Stevenson & Co.)

TORONTO, 31st January, 1874.

Reply of the Rev. James Porter, Inspector, City of Toronto, to the Education Office Circular in reference to the Book Depository. See p. 13 of this letter

"I received a copy of a circular, signed by Dr. Hodgins, Deputy Superintendent of Education, respecting the policy of supplying the Public and High Schools of the Province with library and prize books, maps, apparatus from the Depository of that Department, accompanied with a statement of the principles on which those articles are supplied by the Department to the Schools receiving Legislative aid, and with other information on the subject; and inviting such advice regarding it as, in the interest of the Schools, I may be able to offer. I have carefully read the statement of principles and the information referred to, and have been in the habit for many years of reading whatever I have met with that has related to the questions which they involve. The principles which seem to me appropriate to that question, and the conclusion to which they have conducted me, are the following:—The proper province of civil government is the protection of the persons and property of those for whose benefit it exists. Such protection cannot be adequately afforded, unless children and youth be rightly educated and restrained. The education and restraint of youth devolve, in the first instance on their parents or guardians; but when these private persons neglect to discharge their duty, the public welfare, which is the highest social law, requires that the State shall protect itself by means of public education and discipline. By common consent, through representative institutions, a Public School system involving instruction, training, and in some cases restraint, industrial teaching, and even penal and reformatory treatment, may come into existence and be permanently maintained. All that is necessary to the attainment of these objects will, of course, be conceded; but, as human nature is constituted, there will always be presented to those whose duty it is to organize and administer such a system, a temptation to undertake more than it really demands. What may be, under certain circumstances, temporarily useful may thus come to be considered as generally and forever expedient, even if not regarded as absolutely indispensable. Another important principle is thus suggested, namely: That the power of civil government should not be exerted beyond the boundaries of its proper province. One tendency of governments is to over govern. The good of the people is so admirable and amiable an object that its pursuit may often be engaged in to the oblivion of the people's rights. Everything apparently desirable and important in this world at least may become the subject of legislative provision, on the ground that it is for the good of the people; and food and clothing, education and medical treatment, as well as trade, commerce, and transit, and all the ordinary accidents of human life, may be dealt with according to law. It may be well to legislate for uniformity of text-books in Schools partly supported and therefore inspected by the State, and it may have been well to make provision, as was done first in the State of New York in 1835, and in Massachusetts in 1837, for Common School Libraries, but the best method of procuring such libraries may be and still remains a question. Intelligent practical educators may be glad to inspect any description of books and plans and models which relate to their business, but may at the same time desire to be free to purchase such materials as they require, in an open market unaffected by either bounties or restrictions. It is well known that Dr. Fraser (now Bishop of Manchester) when he visited this Province a few years ago, both privately and publicly argued against the perpetuation in Canada of a provincial book and apparatus Depository, which he uniformly represented as un-

sound in principle and injurious in practice.* Dr. Fraser candidly admitted that a British precedent for such institutions had been set by the Committee of Privy Council on Education, which, however he affirmed had seen and acknowledged its error, and had freed itself from the incumbrance and opprobrium which that error involved. My own conclusions from the principles above stated are that as the earlier portion of the British precedent has been adopted in this Province on the not dishonourable ground of temporary expediency and assumed popular advantage; so the latter portion of this precedent should now be followed, on the grounds of simplicity, broad and permanent expediency, and even on those of commercial freedom and equity. The imputation of unworthy motives to those who take either view of this subject may be very earnestly deprecated. Human motives, at least, are mingled, and men can scarcely be expected to fairly judge their own. Pecuniary greed is a very powerful motive, but not the only powerful motive to human action. A consciousness of social power and special influence, involving dignity and patronage, is not unpleasant to an ambitious or a generous mind. But they who desire the abatement of what seems to them an injurious monopoly need not be charged with the former, and they who desire the maintenance of, in their view, a public benefit, need not be charged with the latter."

* NOTE BY THE CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT.—Dr. Fraser was entirely mistaken in supposing that the Canadian system was that which had been adopted by the English Privy Council Committee on Education; whereas the systems are essentially different. The Privy Council gave its sanction to text-books in the hands of private parties, who had the monopoly of the sale between them, charged high prices, and realized enormous profits at the expense of the public; but the Council of Public Instruction sanctions no text-book for use in the schools without careful examination of it, and without having the printing and sale of it open to public competition—thus permitting no monopoly, and promoting both the improved quality and cheapness of each text-book published.

In England the Privy Council Committee supplied books and apparatus at certain prices, but through the agency of a publishing house, which realized large profits. In Canada the library and prize books are procured at the lowest prices; the maps, globes and apparatus are obtained by tender, and furnished to school authorities only (not to private individuals) at half cost prices. Mr. Lingen, for many years Secretary of the Privy Council Committee of Education, was convinced of the defects of the English system, and warned me against it. I was, therefore, careful to avoid them in devising a system for Upper Canada, of which Dr. Fraser was not aware.

